Film as Text

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1. ***What is Film Noir and how does Gattaca use these techniques?*** Film Noir is a type of film. It’s a French term meaning ‘black film’ and was used in old Hollywood dramas or suspense. It has a low key, black and white style that adds a chilly feeling of darkness and suspense. Gattaca uses this style in important scenes to mimic the anxiety of this ‘perfect’ world. All the scenes in Gattaca are lacking the colour that we viewers would associate with warmth but instead use colours that fully emphasise Gattaca’s bleak and darkness.
2. ***What are the main settings in Gattaca? Describe these settings and how they are sued to contrast each other.*** The main settings in Gattaca are the office, Jerome’s apartment, the navigation lab, the space centre, Irene’s house and the police centre. All these spaces have a bare feeling as if all feeling has been sucked out of them. The fact that the surroundings also seem familiar to us imprints in the viewer the fact that this might be the ‘not too distant future.”
3. ***Describe how lighting and colour enhance Niccol’s message of the film.***  Lighting and colour enhance Niccol’s message of the film by the colours he’s used to represent each setting. For example the Gattaca complex. Throughout the movie we start to relate blusish/grey colours. This makes Gattaca seem a cold, sterile and controlled place just like Niccol wants us to and shows Gattaca’s quest for perfection. Lighting also played a huge role because it helped us as the viewer to portray something as a certain way. For example when Irene and Vincent were hiding from Anton lighting and shades created the effect of danger towards them.
4. ***Why is editing important in connecting the characters and the message of the film? Describe how editing is used in the final scene of Gattaca.*** Editing is important in connecting the characters and the message of the film because it creates a relationship between the two. It highlights important moments and creates suspense. In the final scene where Jerome commits suicide and Vincent goes on the shuttle. The crossing of shots takes us back to their intertwined relationship just like the double helix, although going in separate paths through circumstances and brought together. Even to the end of Jerome’s life they experiences were similar.
5. ***How does Niccol manipulate sound? Refer to key scenes in your answer.*** Niccol manipulates sound by enhancing the skin and hair falling down at the start of the film. For them to make such a loud noise we know is impossible, but the fact that we can hear it ties in their importance (genetics). When Vincent has to walk across the busy freeway with his contacts out we see the blurred vision and the loud whirring cars, this emphasises his danger and invites the viewer to the suspense and danger.
6. ***How are different camera angles used in establishing relationships between viewer and subject and also power relations in the film?***  The camera angle in relation to the subject (what’s being filmed) is used to create a point of view. Whichever angle is chosen for this subject helps the viewer identify them in a particular way. For example wide-shots of the Gattaca complex are used to create distance. They also emphasise Gattaca’s sparseness and how sterile it is. From these angles the viewer identifies Gattaca as cold, so different from our world today.
7. ***What does costumes of the character symbolise? Give examples of for both the valise and in-valids.*** The costumes of the Characters symbolise their lack of individuality. We understand this because they dress drab and conformist. This is not only for the in-valids but also valids. What they wear and cold and lack any colour. The style of costumes takes from the 40’s and 50’s, the long trench coats that Anton wears gives the connotation of the secret police and Gestapo.
8. ***What is a motif and what is the meaning of the recurring motifs in Gattaca?*** A Motif is a recurring item that symbolises or helps us associate it with a feeling or scene. For example the motif of water. The ocean in general represents Vincent’s struggle to become Jerome and to keep it a secret. They scene when he beats his brother Anton took place in the ocean and it even symbolises purification. When he sleeps with Irene he scrubs himself with the sand removing any cells that identify him as Vincent.